

ANNUAL REPORTS
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND
SURVEYOR AND INSPECTOR
OF NUISANCES
FOR THE
STREET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,
1919.

STREET, Somerset,

March, 1920.

Mr. Chairman, Miss Impey and Gentlemen,

We have the honour to submit to you our Reports
for the year ending December 31st, 1919.

Area of the Parish of Street.—2918 acres.

Population—Census 1911, 4235.

The estimated Population for 1919 is 4379. In 1918 it was 4344.

Geology.—The strata consists of lower lias, alternate beds of limestone, clays and marls.

Occupations.

The principal occupations carried on at Street are Boot and Shoe Making, the Manufacture of Leather-board, Agriculture, Tanning, and Limestone Quarrying.

Birth-rate for the year 1919 was 56, consisting of 30 males and 26 females—giving a birth-rate of 12.8 per 1000 living.

There was one illegitimate birth—one male.

Death-rate.

The deaths during the year numbered 47, consisting of 21 males and 26 females, giving a death-rate of 10.23 per 100 living, corrected for inward transfers.

Zymotic Death-rate was nil.

Infantile Mortality.

Four Deaths under 1 year were registered; giving an Infantile Mortality of 71.43 per 1000 births registered.

For the year 1918 (the estimated Population was 4344):

Birth-rate per 1000 living	...	...	14.50
Death-rate „ „ „	...	...	11.29
Infantile Mortality	...	...	79.46
Death-rate of Tuberculosis (all forms)	...	...	0.23

The Age Table of Deaths in 1919:

Under 1 year	...	...	3 deaths
1 year and 2 years	...	...	1 death
2 years „ 5 „	...	...	1 „
5 „ „ 15 „	...	...	2 deaths
15 „ „ 25 „	...	...	2 „
25 „ „ 45 „	...	...	7 „
45 „ „ 65 „	...	...	6 „
65 „ „ above	...	...	21 „
			—
			43
			—

Causes of Death during 1915:

Influenza	...	...	...	4
Tuberculosis Pulm.	...	...	...	8
„ other forms	...	...	...	3
Malignant Disease	...	...	...	7
Meningitis	...	...	...	1
Heart Disease	...	...	...	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	1
Other defined diseases	...	...	...	14
Congenital Debility	...	...	...	4
				—
				43
				—

Prevalence of Disease.

INFLUENZA.—The epidemic which began in October, 1918, continued until the middle of March, 1919. Many cases were complicated with Pneumonia of which 3 died during the first quarter of the year. Sporadic cases occurred throughout the year, and in November there was a recrudescence of the disease, but of a less serious type than in the early part of the year.

SCARLATINA.—Ten cases were notified and were admitted into the Isolation Hospital.

TUBERCULOSIS, all forms.—Fourteen cases were notified. Eleven deaths occurred in the year. All new cases are notified at the County Medical Office of Health, and are visited periodically by Health Visitors. The majority receive treatment at the Dispensary for Tuberculosis at Glastonbury, or are sent to Sanatoria. All cases are kept under observation, and in case of removal or death, the premises are disinfected.

CHICKEN POX AND MEASLES have also been prevalent—the former during March and April—the latter sporadically throughout the year.

In such diseases as Diphtheria, Enteric Fever, Tuberculosis and Dysentery, the facilities offered by the Bacteriological Laboratory at Weston-S.-Mare are utilized for the verification of diagnosis.

In Diphtheria, D. Antitoxm is employed in all cases, and when necessary, it is provided at the cost of the U.D.C.

Infectious Diseases notified, etc.

			Deaths	Deaths	Removed to	
			1919	1918	Isolation Hosp.	
	1919	1918	1919	1918	1919	1918
Scarlet Fever	...	10	28	0	10	13
Diphtheria	...	1	10	0	0	0
Erysipelas	...	0	2	0	0	0
Enteric Fever	..	0	2	0	0	0
Tuberculosis, all forms	14	9	11	15		
Influenza	...	Epidemic	Epidemic	4	4	

Notification of Births is now compulsory in the Street area.

Notifications are sent direct to the County Medical Officer.

Disinfection of Rooms.

Disinfection has been carried out by the Sanitary Inspector on instructions from the Medical Officer of Health.

A Steam Disinfector is in use at the Isolation Hospital.

Methods of Disinfection in use.

Thresh's Disinfector at the Ho-pital. Disinfection of premises in home isolation is carried out under the Sanitary Inspector's orders. The rooms are sprayed with Cyllin.

The rooms of deceased Phthisical patients are also disinfected, and also in the case of removals.

Common Lodging Houses.

There is no common Lodging-House in the district.

Water Supply.

The town is well supplied with water from the Mendip Hills—the pipe line from the Intake Works to the Low Level Reservoir being some 10 miles in length.

The works are under the control of the Urban District Council and were constructed in 1902-4 under a special Act of Parliament.

Parts of the Rural District of Wells are included in the area of supply.

The main supply is obtained from springs emerging from the Limestone strata of the Mendip Hills at Rodney Stoke, and the water is collected and conveyed to an intake chamber and from there in 9 inch cast iron pipes across low lying moorland to a low level Reservoir of 300,000 gallons capacity at a level of 105 feet Ordnance datum at Keens Sug. On the site of this reservoir there is a pumping station with a duplicate set of three throw pumps, driven by electricity, to pump water to a high level Reservoir having a capacity of 150,000 gallons at a level of 180 feet Ordnance datum at Leigh Holt.

Both the reservoirs are covered, and there are about 24 miles of distributing mains with valves, hydrants, and arrangements for securing the full pressure from the high level Reservoir in case of fire.

The supply from the main springs is sufficient to give a constant supply for the needs of the district during the greater part of the year, but in very dry seasons the yield from the springs greatly diminish. In 1911 the main springs stopped altogether. To prevent a recurrence of this state of things additional works were undertaken to augment the main supply in times of drought. These works were completed in 1915, and consist of a steel lined bore hole some 360 feet deep, from which about 70,000 gallons per day is raised by an air compressing plant to a water tower 40 feet high, from which the water gravitates into the 9 in. cast iron supply main.

The capital cost of the whole work approximated to £30,000.

The season of 1919 was very dry, and the supply available from the main springs towards the latter end of the dry spell was practically negligible, but throughout we were able to give a constant service by the working of the emergency bore hole supply.

Cast iron mains and galvanized service pipes are used.

There is a difficulty in maintaining the supply owing to the external corrosion of some miles of the cast iron pipe line by local electrolysis where the pipes are laid through waterlogged peaty moorland. Protective works are in course of construction for coating the pipes with 6 in. of cement concrete composed of limestone chips and cement. About 1 mile of the main was so treated in 1919, at a cost of about £1,200, and will be continued during 1920.

Samples of water have been sent to the County Laboratory during the year and the Analyst reported the water to be free from harmful contamination.

Houses connected with the public supply	...	850
" " during the year	...	7

Rivers and Streams.

The River Brue, under the control of the Upper Brue Drainage Board, runs through the district. There is no pollution of a gross character.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

The town is sewered throughout and is on the partially separate system.

Some of the sewers are becoming taxed to their utmost capacity at times, and in case of development in some parts of the district the question of increase in the size of some of the sewers will have to be considered.

The sewage gravitates to the Outfall Works in Farm Lane and is dealt with after passing through settling tanks by broad irrigation on 46 acres of land belonging to the Council. The land is divided into beds across which carriers and drainage channels are cut and the effluent is discharged into the River Brue and no complaints have been received with regard to this.

Root crops, potatoes and willows are grown on the land which realized last year about £1,600 for relief of the rates.

Closet Accommodation.

Most of the houses (about 900) are connected with the sewerage system, and the majority are fitted with water closets with flushing cisterns, but some are flushed by hand, a state of things which is not desirable, especially where more than one family use the closet. The necessity of all closets having proper flushing arrangements cannot be too greatly emphasised from a health standpoint.

There are also a large number of Hopper closets with the front bricked up. When any alterations are being carried out this type is being discarded, and a cheap form of pedestal pan used, left entirely free from enclosure with brickwork—this form of closet being far more cleanly.

The remaining houses not connected with the sewers are isolated cases on the outskirts of the district where no sewers exist.

In these cases the accommodation consists of earth closets.

Collection of House Refuse.

This is carried out systematically every week by direct labour, and the occupiers place the receptacles in the street on the day of collection.

The refuse is deposited in quarry pits.

It is desirable that a covered cart should be provided for collection in place of the open waggon now used.

In some cases there are proper Sanitary Dust Bins but the majority of the receptacles consist of open boxes or tins.

Sanitary Inspections.

312 inspections have been made during the year. 18 informal notices have been served and complied with in the following cases:

Defective Drainage Systems	reconstructed	7
Blocked Drains	... ..	8
Accumulation of Rubbish	... ..	2
Caravans	... ..	1

There are no notices outstanding.

Public Schools.

There is one large Public School in the district, and a smaller one for Infants at Overleigh,

There is also a County Technical School and a Private Secondary School in the Town.

A School Nurse and Health Visitor assist at the inspections of the children, which are carried out by the C.C. School Inspectors.

The sanitary condition and water supply of the Public Schools is satisfactory.

Buildings.

As in the majority of districts the building trade has been practically at a standstill during the year.

The water test is applied to new drains before they are covered in.

In the near future the Council should consider the question of adopting Byelaws to regulate the construction of drains to existing buildings as the Byelaws at present in force apply only to the construction of drains to new buildings.

Dairies and Cowsheds.

This is a milk-producing district, and although the conditions under which the milk is produced are above the average, there is much required to be done in securing that such an important food is produced under the best possible hygienic conditions.

The Dairies, Cow-sheds and Milk-Shops' Regulations are in force but these are inadequate to deal properly with the matter.

New legislation is required giving the Authorities more drastic powers before the best results can be secured.

The cows are kept out on the land during most part of the year, so that cowsheds are not used to a great extent, but more attention should be given to the cleanliness of the cows, and this might also be said to apply to some of the milkers themselves.

Where the mains are available the Public Water Supply is laid on to all Dairies.

There are 23 Dairymen including Milk-sellers and Dairy Produce-workers.

There are 6 Retailers who deliver milk.

Slaughter Houses.

These are frequently inspected, and there are five on the register including one new temporary licence granted during the year.

A legacy of £600 has recently been left to the town towards the establishing of a Public Slaughter House. The site has been acquired, plans have been prepared, and the erection of the building will be proceeded with as soon as conditions permit. We have impressed upon the Council the necessity of such a scheme, which need only be on a small scale, as long as the building is sanitary and there is some control over the slaughtering.

Under the present system of Private Slaughter Houses, it is absolutely impossible to properly deal with the matter of Meat Inspection, and until the Ministry of Health realise the necessity of giving greater powers to Council to deal with Private Slaughter Houses, little can be done in the way of systematic inspection.

There are no doubt many Councils who would be willing to establish Public Slaughter Houses if powers were given to abolish the Private Slaughter Houses, but as the law exists it is most difficult to do this, especially in old-standing cases.

Private Slaughter Houses at the best are insanitary. Where a Public Slaughter House is provided in any district powers should be given to abolish existing Private Slaughter Houses without compensation. This is the only way of bringing the inspection of meat under proper control and protecting the public against having inferior and often diseased meat foisted upon them.

One prosecution has been taken and defendant's convicted for slaughtering on unlicensed premises.

Bakehouses.

There are 6 in the district, and these are periodically visited and instructions given to limewash where required.

Factories and Workshops.

There are 4 factories, 1 tannery, and 15 other work places. There are 119 out-workers, the majority being employed in the boot trade.

The sanitary condition of all are satisfactory and no complaints have been received from H.M. Inspector of Factories.

Housing and Town Planning Act 1909.

The total number of houses in the District			
at the end of 1919	...	...	996
New houses erected	...	...	0
Houses inspected under the Housing Act			
of 1909	...	...	105
Houses without recorded defects	...	...	80
Houses with defects but not unfit for habitation	...	...	25
Houses unfit	..	...	0
„ with defects remedied	...	...	20
„ „ „ outstanding	...	...	5

HOUSES UNFIT FOR HABITATION:—

Number remaining closed at the beginning			
of 1919	...	...	2
Number repaired after closing order	...	...	0
„ still closed	...	...	2

No cases of overcrowding have been dealt with during the year owing to the extreme shortage of accommodation.

The housing situation in the district is acute. There is an extreme shortage and in many cases 2 or more families are occupying the same house.

The Council have a scheme in hand for 120 houses as a commencement. All the site, lay out and house plans, &c., have been prepared and approved, and it now remains for the price of the houses to be settled between the builders and the Ministry. There are still difficulties ahead before a start can be made in the actual building owing to the high continued increase in the price of materials and the shortage of labour.

The Council however are pushing on the scheme as speedily as possible.

We are, Miss Impey and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servants,

GEORGE FORDEN, M.R.C.S., L.S.A.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

and

WILFRID J. GOODE, M.INST. M.C.E., M.R.S.I.

ASSOC. MEM. INST. WATER ENGINEERS ;

CERT MEAT AND FOODS INSPECTOR ;

WATER ENGINEER, SURVEYOR & SANITARY
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